

# Devotional Diary 22 -28 December 2014

Rhythm of Worship // [www.jamesnicolson.co.za](http://www.jamesnicolson.co.za)

Readings for the week with thanks to [www.gbod.org](http://www.gbod.org)

## Christmas Day, Year B, 25 December 2014

[Isaiah 52:7-10](#). The LORD returns to Jerusalem. The exile is over. "All the ends of the earth shall see our God's salvation."

Psalm response: [Psalm 98](#). A song of praise for God's intervention to save God's people.

[Hebrews 1:1-4, \(5-12\)](#). In Jesus, God has given us no mere angel or messenger, but "the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being. . . [who] sustains all things by his powerful word."

[John 1:1-14](#). The mystery of the Word made flesh, dwelling ("pitching tent") among us, and empowering us to become children of God.

## First Sunday after Christmas Day, Year B. 28 December 2014

[Isaiah 61:10-62:3](#). The prophet speaks not only of the restoration of Jerusalem but of its "vindication" that "shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch."

[Psalm 148](#). All the orders of creation join in praise to God.

[Galatians 4:4-7](#). God's adoption of all baptized into Christ makes us God's children and heirs to the promises of God's covenant.

[Luke 2:22-40](#). Luke describes the song (Simeon) and the prophecy (Anna) that accompany the presentation of Jesus at the temple at the time of his family's offering of the sacrifice for the firstborn.

### **Monday:**

**Adoration Focus:** This week picture yourself kneeling at the manger. Try to take in what is before you and then respond in praise. Today's focus: Love that puts everything on the line.

**Confession:** When we see how far God's love has gone, we become aware of how we guard and restrict **our** love. Let God's love set you free so that your love may reach out beyond these restrictive boundaries. Today's focus: Putting restrictions on your love.

**The Word:** See readings above or use your own devotional guide/readings.

#### **Seeking the Kingdom**

**Shared Focus:** This week we pray for the gift of new birth (new beginnings, new opportunities, new vision, new energy, new freedom, new life.) Today: Pray for the youth.

**Personal prayers:** (Use this section to list people you need to pray for or situations of personal concern that you need to bring before God in prayer)

**Dedication:** Dear Christ, as you were born into this world through God's love, enable me to be born into this same love today.

### **Tuesday:**

**Adoration Focus:** This week picture yourself kneeling at the manger. Try to take in what is before you and then respond in praise. Today's focus: Reconciling love.

**Confession:** See Monday's confession. Today's focus: The call to love something/someone outside of yourself.

**The Word:** See readings above or use your own devotional guide/readings.

#### **Seeking the Kingdom:**

**Shared Focus:** This week we pray for the gift of new birth (new beginnings, new opportunities, new vision, new energy, new freedom, new life.) Today: Pray for a deadlocked situation.

**Personal Prayers:**

**Dedication:** Dear Christ, as you were born into this world through God's love, enable me to be born into this same love today.

### **Wednesday:**

**Adoration Focus:** This week picture yourself kneeling at the manger. Try to take in what is before you and then respond in praise. Today's focus: "In spite of" love.

**Confession:** See Monday's confession. Today's focus: Learning to love "in spite of".

**The Word:** See readings above or use your own devotional guide/readings.

#### **Seeking the Kingdom:**

**Shared Focus:** This week we pray for the gift of new birth (new beginnings, new opportunities, new vision, new energy, new freedom, new life.) Today: Pray for a family member.

**Personal prayers:**

**Dedication:** Dear Christ, as you were born into this world through God's love, enable me to be born into this same love today.

**Thursday:**

**Adoration Focus:** This week picture yourself kneeling at the manger. Try to take in what is before you and then respond in praise. Today's focus: Love that invites a response.

**Confession:** When we see how far God's love has gone, we become aware of how we guard and restrict our love. Let God's love set you free so that your love may reach out beyond these restrictive boundaries. Today's focus: Investing in someone else's growth.

**The Word:** See readings above or use your own devotional guide/readings.

**Seeking the Kingdom:**

**Shared Focus:** This week we pray for the gift of new birth (new beginnings, new opportunities, new vision, new energy, new freedom, new life.) Today: Pray for your country.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: Dear Christ, as you were born into this world through God's love, enable me to be born into this same love today.

**Friday:**

**Adoration Focus:** This week picture yourself kneeling at the manger. Try to take in what is before you and then respond in praise. Today's focus: Love expressing God's heart.

**Confession:** When we see how far God's love has gone, we become aware of how we guard and restrict our love. Let God's love set you free so that your love may reach out beyond these restrictive boundaries. Today's focus: Having a heart of love (the very center of who you are).

**The Word:** See readings above or use your own devotional guide/readings.

**Seeking the Kingdom:**

**Shared Focus:** This week we pray for the gift of new birth (new beginnings, new opportunities, new vision, new energy, new freedom, new life.) Today: Pray for your church community.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: Dear Christ, as you were born into this world through God's love, enable me to be born into this same love today.

**Saturday:**

**Adoration Focus:** This week picture yourself kneeling at the manger. Try to take in what is before you and then respond in praise. Today's focus: Love taking root in your heart.

**Confession:** When we see how far God's love has gone, we become aware of how we guard and restrict our love. Let God's love set you free so that your love may reach out beyond these restrictive boundaries. Today's focus: Reclaiming what you have been created for: love.

**The Word:** See readings above or use your own devotional guide/readings.

**Seeking the Kingdom:**

**Shared Focus:** This week we pray for the gift of new birth (new beginnings, new opportunities, new vision, new energy, new freedom, new life.) Today: Pray for someone you care for.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: Dear Christ, as you were born into this world through God's love, enable me to be born into this same love today.

**Sunday:**

**Adoration Focus:** This week picture yourself kneeling at the manger. Try to take in what is before you and then respond in praise. Today's focus: Love showing us the way.

**Confession:** When we see how far God's love has gone, we become aware of how we guard and restrict our love. Let God's love set you free so that your love may reach out beyond these restrictive boundaries. Today's focus: Loving God.

**The Word:** See readings above or use your own devotional guide/readings.

**Seeking the Kingdom:**

**Shared Focus:** This week we pray for the gift of new birth (new beginnings, new opportunities, new vision, new energy, new freedom, new life.) Today: Pray for your own life.

Personal prayers:

Dedication: Dear Christ, as you were born into this world through God's love, enable me to be born into this same love today.

# **Weekly Rhythm**

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This week I am sharing a BIBLE STUDY METHOD as presented by Terry Fulham. Your challenge will be to see if you can apply it to the passages as presented this week.

## **THIS METHOD INVOLVES ASKING AND ANSWERING THREE QUESTIONS:**

These questions are interrelated and you cannot do one without the other.

1) **What does the passage say?** This is the most important and is often given the least attention: What is actually there? (Observe Accurately) Pray: Ask God to assist; get on God's wavelength. You are not manipulating God.

Read:

- a) Slowly, thoughtfully, perceptively
- b) Repetitively
- c) In a variety of translations (see [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com))
- d) sometimes aloud (add a sense)

2) **What does the passage mean?** (Interpret Correctly)

Question the passage: Put your mind in an inquisitive frame of reference:

*"I keep six honest serving men,  
They taught me all I know.  
Their names are What, and Where, and When,  
And Why, and How, and Who."  
(Rudyard Kipling)*

Principles of Interpretation:

a] A passage means whatever its author intended it to mean. You need to know about the author and background. Consult your Bible handbook ([www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) has many helpful resources.)

b] In the Bible God reveals Himself progressively. Certain stories need to be seen in the light of later revelation.

c] Consider the method of correlation. In the Bible God inspired people to write, there is a human element. Thus the need to compare different passages: What did others say in their contexts (thus the need for a reference Bible)

3) **How does the passage apply to my life?** (Apply Drastically!)

THE LEVEL OF APPLICATION

A] Application Questions:

- S] Is there a sin to confess?
- P] Is there a promise to receive?
- A] Is there an attitude to be cultivated or avoided?
- C] Is there a command to be obeyed?
- E] Is there an example to follow or avoid?
  
- S] Is there something for which to give thanks?
- T] Is there a truth to be believed?
- E] Is there an error to reject?
- P] **PRAY THE PASSAGE!** Be in dialogue with God.

## **Christmas Prayer: Bethlehem, House of Bread**

Thank you Scandalous God,  
For giving yourself to the world,  
Not in the powerful and extraordinary,  
But in weakness and the familiar:  
In a baby; in bread and wine.

Thank you  
For offering, at journey's end, a new beginning;  
For setting, in the poverty of a stable,  
The richest jewel of your love;  
For revealing, in a particular place,  
Your light for all nations.

Thank you  
For bringing us to Bethlehem, House of Bread,  
Where the empty are filled,  
And the filled are emptied;  
Where the poor find riches,  
And the rich recognize their poverty;  
Where all who kneel and hold out their hands  
Are unstintingly fed.

~ written by Kate Compston, from Bread of Tomorrow. Posted on Bread for the World.  
<http://www.bread.org/help/church/worship/prayers/christmas-prayers-about-hunger/kate-compston.pdf>